

*PLATYSTETHUS SPICULUS* ER. (STAPHYLINIDAE)  
IN FLORIDA

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On 11 January 1975 I discovered a fairly fresh deposit of horse dung in the vicinity of my house, about 5 miles south of Vero Beach, Indian River County, Florida. The dung, placed in a Berlese funnel, produced 45 adults of a species of *Platystethus*. I was unable to distinguish these from examples of a species in my collection from Jamaica and from Haiti. These latter agree well with the description of *P. spiculus* Er. given by Blackwelder (1943), who considered *P. spiculus* to be the only species of the genus present among the material he had examined from the West Indies. I later (27 April 1975) collected 77 examples from a slime mold *Fuligo septica* (L.) Wigger in the same locality and one example (22 May 1975) from chicken guano a few miles north.

*P. spiculus* is recorded from South and Central America and Mexico, in addition to the West Indies, by Blackwelder (1943), but in the United States only from Texas by Casey (1886) and Arizona and California by Moore and Legner (1971). Despite a brief comparison by Sharp (1887) and a key by Moore and Legner (1971) I was uncertain of the characters distinguishing *P. spiculus* from *P. americanus* Er., which is widely distributed in the United States according to Arnett (1960). Because I had no known examples of *P. americanus* in my collection, I sent 10 of the Florida examples to Lee Herman. He kindly compared them with examples of *P. americanus*, informed me that he did not believe them to be conspecific, and sent me 5 examples of *P. americanus*. After comparison with the latter, I believe that the Florida examples are conspecific with the species believed by Blackwelder (1943) to be *P. spiculus*.

The descriptions of *P. americanus* and *P. spiculus* as given by Moore and Legner (1971) are essentially correct, but further clarification of the characters of the head would be helpful.

In *P. spiculus* the sclerotized postclypeus of the male is centrally emarginate to the level of the antennal ridge and is laterally produced into a pair of slender horns, from 1X to 2X as long as the distance between them; these horns extend anteriorly well beyond the corneous anteclypeus. In the female the sclerotized postclypeus is slightly, broadly emarginate, not nearly as far posteriorly as the antennal ridge, and the emargination produces an effect of 2 short, blunt, triangular horns; these however do not extend anteriorly beyond the margin of the corneous anteclypeus, thus giving the entire clypeus a rounded, protruding appearance.

In *P. americanus* the sclerotized postclypeus of the male is centrally, but not very deeply, emarginate to the level of the antennal ridge and is laterally produced into a pair of sharp, triangular horns not more than 0.25X as long as the distance between them; these horns lie on either side of the rather narrow corneous anteclypeus and thus laterally, but not centrally, protrude beyond its margin. In the female the sclerotized postclypeus is broadly and shallowly emarginate, not nearly as far posteriorly as the antennal ridge, and the emargination is so shallow that the anterior angles of the postclypeus do not give the appearance of horns.

In *P. spiculus* the head of both sexes is finely and sparsely punctate. The male has, on each side of the head, 3 longitudinal sulci between the vertex

and the eye, called here respectively (from vertex outwards) central, outer, and ocular. In the female the ocular groove is distinct, the central groove is obsolescent anteriorly, and the outer groove is reduced, sometimes so reduced as to appear absent.

In *P. americanus* the head is coarsely punctate, the punctures tending to become longitudinally confluent, especially laterally. The head has a single longitudinal sulcus at each side, in the position of the ocular sulcus of *P. americanus*.

Females of *P. spiculus* with the outer sulcus so reduced as to be considered "absent" by Blackwelder (1943) and Moore and Legner (1971) will match the very brief description of *P. obscurus* Sharp (1887) from Mexico. This raises the question of possible synonymy of the name *P. obscurus* because no males of that species have, to my knowledge, ever been recognized. I have not seen the holotype of *P. obscurus* and do not know whether it has any other characters distinguishing it from *P. spiculus*.

The food of *P. spiculus* is unknown. On the evidence of the occurrence of adults in *Fuligo septica*, where no other animals were seen, the slime mold itself may provide food.

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